

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01

INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-20 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06

SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07

CEA-01 STRE-00 ITC-01 L-03 /107 W

-----058583 101233Z /47

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7792

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PASS STR ELECTRONCIALLY

PASS COMMERCE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY WEIL

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, JA, US

SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE; FOREIGN MINISTER

SONODA CALLS FOR COOPERATION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES

AND AGENCIES

1. NIHON KEIZAI "UNDERCURRENTS" COLUMN MAY 10 CARRIES FOLLOWING STORY UNDER HEADLINE: "SMOOTHING OUT OF OPERATION OF TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE; FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES FIRST MOVE TO END "US DISSATISFACTION"; MITI APPEALS TO OTHER MINISTRIES FOR COOPERATION". EMBASSY COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THERE IS SMOLDERING US DISSATISFACTION OVER THE OPERATION OF THE US-JAPAN TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE, WHICH IS A KIND OF 'COURT OF APPEAL' FOR US-JAPAN TRADE. FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA, AT THE CABINET MEETING ON THE 9TH, IN CONNECTION WITH A REPORT ON THE JAPAN-US SUMMIT TALKS, CALLED FOR THE "COOPERATION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES CONCERNED FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SETTling OF VARIOUS PENDING ISSUES, AS THE US SIDE ATTACHES STRONG EXPECTATIONS TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE." MITI MINISTER KOMOTO ALSO SAID THAT "ITS ACTIVITIES SO FAR HAVE NOT BEEN ADEQUATE", AND INDICATED THE COMMITTEE MIGHT HAVE TO BE RESTRUCTURED.

THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE WAS ESTABLISHED LAST AUTUMN, BETWEEN MITI AND THE US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, TO AVOID FRICTION IN US-JAPAN TRADE. IT HAS SO FAR DISPOSED OF FIVE (NOTE: ENGLISH MAINICHI CARRIES CORRECT FIGURE "7") US COMPLAINTS, INCLUDING THE TARIFF ASSESSMENT ON POTATO CHIPS. IT ALSO SERVED AS THE VEHICLE FOR THE DISPATCH OF THE IMPORT PROMOTION MISSION TO THE US (HEADED BY MITSUI BUSSAN PRESIDENT YOSHIZO IKEDA). IT HAS PRODUCED SOME RESULTS TO DATE.

HOWEVER, COMPLAINTS ARE BEING PRESENTED BY THE US SIDE, ONE AFTER ANOTHER. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS THE COMPLAINT THAT, ACCOMPANYING THE REVISION OF THE TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE PUBLIC CORPORATION'S LEASE RATES FOR DATA COMMUNICATION TELEPHONE CIRCUITS, IT HAS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO EXPORT AMERICAN-MADE PRODUCTS TO JAPAN. ITS COMPLAINTS HAVE EVEN SPREAD TO JAPAN'S TAX SYSTEM. IT SEEMS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA SENSED THIS ATMOSPHERE DURING THE US-JAPAN SUMMIT TALKS, AND THAT HE MADE THE ABOVE STATEMENT AT THE CABINET MEETING UPON HIS RETURN HOME.

THERE ARE REPORTEDLY MANY "UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS", PROBABLY ARISING FROM EXCESSIVE US EXPECTATIONS OF THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE. EVEN MITI, WHICH TAKES THE SONODA STATEMENT AS A "SUPPORTING COMMENT", FEELS UNCLASSIFIED

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DISTRESSED. IT NOTES THAT "WE WISH TO MEET THE US SIDE'S DEMANDS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BUT TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD THIS COMMITTEE TAKE UP DEMANDS WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE CHANGING OF THE SYSTEMS IN JAPAN FROM THEIR VERY FOUNDATION?"

EVEN MORE THAN THAT, IT SEEMS THAT THE LACK OF UNITY AMONG THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES IS ADDING TO THE DISSATISFACTION ON THE US SIDE. WHEN VIEWED FROM THE US SIDE, ALL PROCEDURES ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETED ONCE A MATTER GOES TO THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE. IT SEEMS VERY FRUSTRATED THAT THERE IS A BIG DELAY IN COORDINATION AMONG THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES CONCERNED. EVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE US-JAPAN SUMMIT TALKS, A CERTAIN AMERICAN CABINET MEMBER REPORTEDLY ASKED, "PROBLEMS COMING UNDER MITI'S JURISDICTION ARE SETTLED RIGHT AWAY. WHY IS IT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO PROBLEMS COMING UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF OTHER MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES, AGREEMENT CANNOT BE REACHED?" OUR GOVERNMENT LEADERS ALSO POINT OUT THAT, AMONG OTHER MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES, THERE IS ALSO A SENSE OF SECTIONALISM, AND THERE ARE CASES OF THIER

INTENTIONALLY DELAYING THEIR ANSWERS, FOR THE VERY REASON
THAT MITI IS ACTING AS THE VEHICLE. IT IS SAID THAT THERE
WAS EVEN THE SITUATION OF MITI'S IMPLOING THAT
EXTERNAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER USHIBA TAKE OVER
AS THE VEHICLE FOR THE TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE.

MITI'S FEELING MUST BE THAT WHEN IT HAS FINALLY
SUCCEEDED IN DISPELLING THE DISGRACEFUL
REPUTATION IN THE US OF BEING "NOTORIOUS MITI", IT IS
NOW BEING BRANDED WITH THE SAME IGNOMINIOUS NAME WITHIN
JAPAN. END TEXT. MANSFIELD

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Draft Date: 10 may 1978
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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